CLAIMS

1. A man-machine interface method comprising:

· generating physical interactions with active zones (10) belonging to an interface object (5), said active zones being associated with predetermined items of information;

· detecting the active zones at which said interactions occur by measuring at least one physical magnitude; and

· associating each detected interaction with the predetermined item of information corresponding to the active zone where said interaction has been detected;

the method being **characterized in that** the active zones are defined for a predetermined finite length of time and then deactivated at the end of said predetermined length of time;

and in that when interactions with said interface object are detected while said active zones are deactivated, said active zones are redefined automatically and successively as a function of the first successively-detected interactions.

2. A method according to claim 1, in which when interactions are detected with the interface object (5) while said active zones (10) are deactivated, said active zones are automatically redefined only if a predetermined initial sequence of successive interactions is detected.

3. A method according to claim 2, in which said predetermined initial sequence of interactions comprises two successive interactions at a single location on the interface object, within a time interval shorter than a predetermined duration.

4. A method according to claim 3, in which the location of said two successive interactions determines a first active zone (10).

5. A method according to any one of claims 2 to 4, in which, during a stage of redefining active zones subsequent to said initial sequence, a predetermined number K of active zones (10) are defined in succession at the locations of the K first interactions to be detected after said initial predetermined sequence of interactions.

6. A method according to claim 5, in which the stage of redefining the active zones is interrupted if no following interaction is detected during a predetermined timeout after a detected interaction.

7. A method according to claim 5 or claim 6, in which during the stage of redefining active zones, an interaction is detected in an active zone (10) when the measured physical magnitude is subject to a variation that is greater than a first predetermined limit, and after said stage of redefining active zones, an interaction is detected in an active zone when the measured physical magnitude is subject to a variation greater than a second predetermined limit that is itself less than the first limit.

8. A method according to claim 5 or claim 6, in which during the stage of redefining active zones, an interaction is detected in an active zone when the measured physical magnitude is subject to a variation for a duration that is longer than a first predetermined limit duration, and after said stage of redefining active zones, an interaction is detected in an active zone when the measured physical magnitude is subject to a variation for a duration that is longer than a second predetermined limit duration, itself shorter than the first limit duration.

9. A method according to claim 1, in which when interactions with the interface object (5) are detected while the active zones (10) are deactivated, the P first detected interactions are recorded during a recording stage, where P is a predetermined non-zero integer, and Z active zones are automatically redefined as a function of said first P detected interactions, where Z is a non-zero integer less than P, corresponding to interactions detected in different zones, and then the predetermined items of information corresponding to the P first detected interactions are determined.

10. A method according to claim 9, in which the recording stage is interrupted if one of the P first interactions is not followed by a following interaction within a time period shorter than a predetermined timeout duration.

11. A method according to claim 1, in which when interactions with the interface object (5) are detected while the active zones (10) are deactivated, the P first detected interactions are recorded during a recording stage, where P is a non-zero integer, said recording stage terminating when the interaction P is substantially identical to the first interaction of the recording stage, and P-1 active zones are automatically redefined as a function of said P first detected interactions corresponding to interactions detected in different zones, and then the predetermined items of information corresponding to the P-1 redefined active zones are determined, with said items of information depending on the number P-1.

12. A method according to any preceding claim, in which the set of active zones is subdivided into a plurality of groups of active zones, and in which when interactions with the interface object are detected in an active zone belonging to a group of deactivated active zones, said

active zones of said group of active zones are redefined
automatically and successively in a manner that is
independent from the other groups of active zones.

5   13. A method according to any preceding claim, in which,
when interactions are detected with the interface object
while said active zones are deactivated, said active
zones are redefined automatically and successively as a
function of the first interactions to be successively
10   detected, and the detected interactions are associated
substantially simultaneously with the predetermined items
of information.

14. A method according to any preceding claim, in which
15   the measured physical magnitude is selected from a
soundwave, a mechanical strain, a quantity of back-
scattered light, and an electric field.

15. A man-machine interface device specially adapted to
20   implement a method according to any preceding claim.